

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OPORTO 00058 021807Z

45

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SUBJECT: POLITICAL BOMBINGS: AN OVERVIEW

REF: (A) LISBON 0642 (DTG 291702Z JAN 76), (B) OPORTO 0051

(291630Z JAN 76)

1. SUMMARY: BOMBING LEFTIST PROPERTY HAS REPLACED TRASHING COMMUNIST OFFICES AS MOST FREQUENT FORM OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE NORTH. OVER 80 BOMBS HAVE EXPLODED IN OPORTO CONSULAR DISTRICT SINCE OCTOBER CAUSING CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE BUT NO SERIOUS INJURY. PRINCIPAL TARGET HAS BEEN PROPERTY BELONGING TO COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP), MEMBERS OR SYMPATHIZERS. NO ARRESTS HAVE BEEN MADE AND NO CLEAR EVIDENCE EXISTS WHO IS RESPONSIBLE. WE BELIEVE BOMBINGS TO BE THE HANDIWORK OF SOME ORGANIZED GROUPS PROBABLY ALLIED WITH DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT FOR LIBERATION OF PORTUGAL (MDLP), SOME LEFTISTS IN ACTS OF PROVOCATION AND REVENGE, AND A FEW INDEPENDENT ANTI-COMMUNISTS WHO COULDN'T RESIST TEMPTATION TO JOIN THE BANDWAGON AND RELIEVE A FEW FRUSTRATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. FREQUENCY: OPORTO PRESS JAN 29 CARRIED PCP REPORT WHICH ATTRIBUTES 145 BOMBINGS, 149 GENERAL ASSAULTS AND 11 SHOOTING ATTACKS TO "FASCIST CRIMINALS" IN PORTUGAL SINCE MAY, 1975 (REFTEL A, PARA 3).

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PAGE 02 OPORTO 00058 021807Z

SEVENTY-FIVE PER CENT OF THESE ACTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE REPORTEDLY

TOOK PLACE IN THE NORTH. IT APPEARS THAT LARGEST NUMBER OF ASSAULTS
TOOK PLACE IN SUMMER MONTHS WITH THE TRASHING OF PCP AND OTHER LEFTIST

CENTERS MOST OF WHICH IN SEVERAL TOWNS NEVER REOPENED. REMAINING
LEFTIST OFFICES WERE LOCATED IN URBAN AREAS AND RUMORED TO BE
FORTIFIED. TRASHING GAVE WAY TO BOMBING AS THE MOST FREQUENT FORM OF
POLITICAL VIOLENCE. ACCORDING TO INFORMAL COUNT, 81 BOMBS HAVE
EXPLODED IN OPORTO CONSULAR DISTRICT SINCE OCT WITH 31 IN NOV AND
30 THUS FAR IN JAN.

3. TARGETS: BOMBS HAVE DAMAGED OR DESTROYED AT LEAST 35 CARS, 30
OFFICES AND SHOPS, AND 8 HOUSES. SOME FORTY PER CENT OF THE BOMBS
WAS DIRECTED AGAINST PCP OFFICES OR PROPERTY BELONGING TO PCP
ACTIVISTS OR KNOWN SYMPATHIZERS, TWENTY PER CENT AGAINST LEFTIST
DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MDP/CDP) AND TWENTY PER CENT AGAINST OTHER
LEFTIST GROUPS INCLUDING TRADE UNIONS AND INFORMATION MEDIA. PERHAPS
TEN PER CENT OF THE TARGETS COULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH ANTI-
COMMUNIST INTERESTS.

4. TECHNIQUES: ALMOST ALL BOMBS HAVE EXPLODED DURING PRE-DAWN HOURS.
MOST HAVE BEEN PLANTED; A FEW HURLED FROM MOVING CARS. DYNAMITE HAS
APPARENTLY BEEN MOST POPULAR FORM OF EXPLOSIVE. TREND HAS BEEN TO
BIGGER BOMBS. EARLIER EXPLOSIONS OFTEN CAUSED MORE NOISE THAN
DAMAGE. IT IS NOT UNCOMMON FOR BOMBS NOW TO BLOW OUT WINDOWS HUNDREDS OF
FEET AWAY. HOWEVER, BOMBINGS HAVE NEVER CAUSED SERIOUS PERSONAL
INJURY.

5. WHO'S RESPONSIBLE: NOT A SINGLE BOMBER HAS BEEN CAUGHT AND THERE
IS RANGE OF OPINION AS TO WHO IS RESPONSIBLE. PCP AND MOST ULTRA-
LEFTISTS BLAME PORTUGUESE LIBERATION ARMY (ELP) OR MDLP. SOME
NORTHERN CONSERVATIVE SOURCES AGREE. OTHER CONSULATE CONTACTS
BELIEVE BOMBINGS PRIMARILY TO BE ACTS OF PROVOCATION BY LEFTISTS
THEMSELVES. THERE IS ALSO THE VIEW THAT MANY BOMBS HAVE BEEN SET BY
INDEPENDENT ANTI-COMMUNISTS UNALLIED WITH ANY POLITICAL GROUP OR
FACTION BUT SIMPLY MOTIVATED BY STRONG ANTI-COMMUNIST FEELING.
CONSIDERABLE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES AND MILITARY VETERANS IN THE
NORTH ARE FAMILIAR WITH EXPLOSIVES AND ARE VERY ANTI-COMMUNIST.
THESE TWO GROUPS IN OPORTO AREA ARE SAID TO BE INVOLVED ONLY WITH
ORGANIZATION AND DO NOT CLAIM CREDIT FOR ANY BOMBINGS. AFTER JAN 14
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PAGE 03 OPORTO 00058 021807Z

BOMBING OF LEFTIST SERVICE CENTER (SAAL) AND JAN 17 BOMBING OF
RUSSIAN FREIGHTER, ANONYMOUS CALLER TO LOCAL RADIO STATION SAID
THAT ANTI-COMMUNIST COMMANDO MOVEMENT (MACAC) WAS RESPONSIBLE.
LOCAL POLICE SOURCES BELIEVE MACAC HAS NO SIGNIFICANCE. SAME
SOURCES ALSO CONSIDER ANTI-COMMUNIST GROUPS LOOSELY CONNECTED WITH
MDLP TO BE PRIMARY FORCE BEHIND BOMBINGS WITH SOME BOMBS ALSO THE
WORK OF ULTRA-LEFTISTS IN ACTS OF PROVOCATION AND REVENGE AND AT
TIME OF NOV 25 COUP ATTEMPT. WE SHARE THIS OPINION WITHOUT HAVING

ANY PROOF. THERE HAVE BEEN TOO MANY SERIES OF COORDINATED BOMBINGS INVOLVING CONSIDERABLE SUPPLY OF EXPLOSIVES NOT TO BELIEVE SOME ORGANIZATION IS BEHIND THE ATTACKS.

6. RESULTS: BOMBING VIOLENCE HAS PRESENTED PCP AND OTHER LEFTISTS WITH TAILOR-MADE CAMPAIGN ISSUE WHICH THEY WILL EXPLOIT TO FULLEST EXTENT. BOMBINGS HAVE ALSO PUT LEFTISTS ON OPERATIONAL DEFENSE AND HAMPERED THEIR ACTIVITIES PARTICULARLY IN RURAL AREAS. LOSS OF CARS HAS PROBABLY REDUCED MOVEMENT OF PERSONNEL AND PROPAGANDA, MAKING IT HARDER FOR PCP AND ALLIES TO CREATE FAÇADE OF STRENGTH. ATTACKS ON MDP HAVE SERVED TO MORE CLOSELY IDENTIFY MDP WITH PCP IN MINDS OF RURAL ILLITERATE POPULATION. IN AT LEAST SIX CASES RANGING FROM LARGE CITIES SUCH AS AVEIRO TO SMALL TOWNS LIKE MURCA, MDP ELEMENTS SERVING ON MUNICIPAL COUNCILS RESIGNED IN JAN BECAUSE OF CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE. BOMBINGS UNDOUBTEDLY CONTRIBUTE TO CONTINUED STATE OF POLITICAL UNREST AND SET UNEASY BACKGROUND TO PRE-ELECTION PERIOD.

7. FUTURE: ORGANIZED BOMBINGS BY RIGHT-WING FORCES WILL HOPEFULLY SPUTTER OUT WITH GROWING REALIZATION THAT CONTINUED VIOLENCE SERVES AS EXCELLENT GRIST FOR PCP PROPAGANDA MILL. HOWEVER, LEFTISTS MAY BE COUNTED ON TO CONTINUE POSSIBLE ACTS OF PROVOCATION. INDEPENDENT-MINDED NORTHERN CONSERVATIVES STILL FRUSTRATED BY COMMUNISTS IN THEIR MIDSTS MIGHT ALSO BE TEMPTED TO MAKE MORE ASSAULTS. THERE MIGHT ALSO BE RANDOM ACTS OF WANTON HOOLIGANISM UNDER GUISE OF POLITICAL MOTIVATION. SERIOUS INJURY BY BOMBING COULD CHANGE THINGS BUT AS LONG AS ONLY PROPERTY IS DAMAGED OCCASIONAL BOMBS WILL PROBABLY BE HEARD FOR SOMETIME TO COME.

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